

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03

INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5045

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, EGNE, PK

SUBJECT: DETAILS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT LAID OUT

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD 11803, (B) ISLAMABAD 11697

1. REF A REPORTED THE GOP'S NEW EMPHASIS ON BASIC HUMAN NEEDS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AS CENTRAL THEMES IN ITS NEW FIVE YEAR PLAN NOW BEING DRAFTED. IN THE PAST, RURAL DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN PLAGUED BY A LACK OF ATTENTION TO LOCAL NEEDS, ADMINISTRATIVE BOTTLENECKS AND INADEQUATE RESOURCES. RECENTLY ANNOUNCED DETAILS OF THE NEW STRATEGY REFLECT THE GOVERNMENT'S DESIRE TO ALLEVIATE THESE PROBLEMS BY DEVELOPING A GRASS ROOTS INPUT INTO RURAL PLANNING, ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM AND A NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT.

2. ZIA CALLED FOR MOBILIZATION OF RURAL RESOURCES ON A "WAR FOOTING" TO ALLEVIATE THE INADEQUACY OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC SERVICES WHICH HE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COUNTRY'S POVERTY AND LOW PRODUCTIVITY. IN ADDITION TO THE NEW FIVE YEAR PLAN (REF B), WHICH WILL BE BUILT AROUND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, ZIA CALLED FOR AN "ACTION PLAN" TO BE DRAWN UP BY DEC 21 OF THIS YEAR. A MEETING OF CONCERNED FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND ACADEMICS

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WILL BE HELD IN ISLAMABAD DURING THE NEXT FEW DAYS TO WORK OUT THE PLANS.

3. NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS STATE THAT THE ACTION PLAN WILL FOCUS ON THE REJUVENATION OF THE MARAKEZ SYSTEM OF THE INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT WING. THE MARAKEZ ARE GOVERNMENT BUILT MULTI-SERVICE CENTERS WHICH WERE ORIGINALLY DESIGNED TO PROVIDE RURAL

COMMUNITIES WITH A CENTRALIZED SOURCE OF AGRICULTURAL INPUTS AND SOCIAL SERVICES, E.G., FERTILIZER, SEED, CREDIT, HEALTH FACILITIES, ETC.

4. THE SUCCESS OF THIS SYSTEM DEPENDS ON THE AVAILABILITY OF SUPPLIES AND THE LOCATION OF THE MULTI-SERVICE CENTERS. IN THE PAST, SITING OF THE CENTERS WAS MAINLY A POLITICAL MATTER WITH LOCAL TRADE AND SOCIAL PATTERNS LARGELY IGNORED. INAPPROPRIATE LOCATION AND INADEQUATE SUPPLIES MEANT THAT THE MARAKEZ COULD NOT PERFORM ITS CATALYTIC FUNCTION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT. ZIA PLEDGED ADEQUATE SUPPLIES FOR THE EXISTING CENTERS AND CALLED FOR THE DIVISION OF ALL OF PAKISTAN'S 45,000 VILLAGES INTO ABOUT 600 MARAKEZ SERVICE AREAS CONSISTING OF 50 TO 60 VILLAGES AND COVERING ABOUT 40,000 HECTARES. HE ALSO ORDERED THE LOCATION TO BE BASED ON THE PERCEIVED NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE, GROWTH POTENTIAL AND LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE CONVENIENCE. ORGANIZATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CONSTRAINTS WOULD BE REMOVED BY RELOCATING CERTAIN URBAN CENTERED DEPARTMENTS TO THE MARAKEZ SERVICE AREAS. PENDING ELECTIONS, AD HOC DEVELOPMENT BOARDS WILL BE SET UP UNDER THE PROVINCIAL MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATORS TO MONITOR THE PROGRESS OF THE PLAN.

5. THE LEAD AGENCY IN THIS STRATEGY SEEMS TO BE THE IRDP WORKING CLOSELY WITH LOCAL INSTITUTIONS. THE MORIBUND NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR DEVELOPMENT IS BEING RECONSTITUTED AND ZIA INDICATED THAT THERE MIGHT BE FURTHER BUREAUCRATIC REORGANIZATION TO ENSURE PROPER COORDINATION OF THE PLAN.

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6. WITH IRDP ALREADY AGGRESSIVELY TRYING TO SEIZE THE MANDATE, THE STAGE IS SET FOR BUREAUCRATIC HASSLES WITHIN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND BETWEEN FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL "NATION BUILDING" DEPARTMENTS.

7. THE INITIAL THRUST OF THE PROGRAM WILL BE TO INCREASE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION BY EFFICIENT DISTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURAL INPUTS. OTHER ACTIONS ARE CONTEMPLATED TO INCREASE RURAL EMPLOYMENT BY PROMOTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AGRO-BASED RURAL INDUSTRIES THROUGH PEOPLES' COOPERATIVES.

8. THESE MEASURES ARE A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, BUT MUCH MORE REMAINS TO BE DONE IF PAKISTAN IS TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEMS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT.

HUMMEL

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